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ABSTRACT

The impact of 2-week summer workshops and weekend reunions on college faculty who participated in the Stanford Program for Faculty Renewal was assessed using a questionnaire completed by 123 workshop participants, workshop and reunion observations, and interviews with 18 persons at 10 campuses. About two-thirds of the respondents were associate or full professors from the humanities. Questionnaire responses revealed high levels of satisfaction. Positive effects on participants' teaching were also identified even though program goals focus on disciplinary content rather than pedagogy. Attending one or more weekend reunions in subsequent years significantly enhanced impact. The observations assessed six indicators of effective instruction, including collaborative planning and corrective feedback. Although workshops and reunions successfully met participants' expectations, they did not consistently exemplify accepted principles of effective teaching and learning. The need to provide emotionally supportive activities for the many professors who are demoralized by their current professional circumstances is discussed. Appendices provide a brief description of the faculty renewal program, and a list of 1979-1983 workshop topics. (Author/SW)

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THE STANFORD PROGRAM FOR FACULTY RENEWAL:

EVALUATION OF WORKSHOPS AND REUNIONS [1]

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Abstract

The impact of two-week summer workshops and weekend reunions on participating college professors was assessed through questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Questionnaire responses revealed high levels of satisfaction. Positive effects on participants' teaching were also identified even though Program goals focus on disciplinary content rather than pedagogy. Attending one or more weekend reunions in subsequent years significantly enhanced impact.

Although workshops and reunions successfully met participants' expectations, they did not consistently exemplify accepted principles of effective teaching and learning. Professional development programs must deal with that inconsistency as well as provide emotionally supportive activities for the many professors who are demoralized by their current professional circumstances.

The central activity of the Stanford Program for Faculty Renewal has been the two week summer workshop. Weekend reunions of workshop participants comprise a significant and innovative second activity. Appendix A provides an overview of these activities in the context of the total Program.

In this paper I discuss the impact of workshops and reunions on participants, analyze the teaching-learning processes observed at those events, and pose two issues for the consideration of persons who design faculty renewal programs.

Impact of Workshops and Reunions

Impact of workshops and reunions was assessed by a three-page questionnaire sent to all 189 participants in 14 workshops (Shaeffer, 1984). The analysis reported here is based on 123

[1] Presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, April, 1985.

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returned questionnaires (65 percent rate of return). Every workshop is represented by at least half its members and the rate for 10 of the 14 workshops is 70 percent or greater.

Respondents appear to be representative of all participants with regard to academic field (about two-thirds from the humanities) and rank (about two-thirds associate or full professor). Because response patterns do not differ by field or by rank, respondents are treated as one group. Additional data are drawn from face-to-face interviews with a convenience sample of participants. Conversations averaging about an hour were held with 18 persons on 10 different campuses.

Level of Satisfaction

Several questionnaire items reveal high levels of participant satisfaction. Table 1 presents grand means (the mean of workshop means) and standard deviations for the extent to which "my expectations for this event were met" (5.7 on a seven-point scale) and the extent to which "the advertised objectives of this event were met" (5.8 on a seven-point scale).

Participants were also satisfied with the way sessions were run, i.e., "Sessions exemplified attributes of effective teaching learning situations" (3.2 on a four-point scale) and with the workshop leaders, i.e., "Leaders personally exemplified attributes of effective teachers" (3.3 on a four-point scale).

This generally positive evaluation is supported by comments volunteered on questionnaires and in interviews. Particularly prominent was praise for the staff's administrative and organizational skills. Program activities were seen as well planned and well run.

High self-rated satisfaction should not be surprising. Who would not be pleased with an intellectually and socially stimulating two-week summer sojourn on the Stanford campus? We could have more confidence in these results as true indicators of program effectiveness if they met two conditions: (a) participants should find some features more satisfactory than others and those differences should reflect program priorities, and (b) participants should rate some workshops

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more positively than others and those distinctions should agree with independent assessments. We shall see that there is evidence for both of these conditions.

Agreement with Objectives

Workshops were planned around specific topics. (Appendix B lists topics by year.) Participants' knowledge and enthusiasm regarding those topics were expected to increase. Workshops did not deal explicitly with pedagogy either in general or as applied to particular workshop topics.

Participants accurately discerned the low priority of pedagogy as shown by the final item in Table 1. "The workshop included teaching methods new to me," was rated below the midpoint, only 2.1 on a four-point scale. Likewise, among the items shown in Table 2 where participants rated the amount of change they experienced, two items dealing with pedagogy (items 4 and 5) were rated below the midpoint. As one person volunteered, "I would not have been interested in attending a two-week workshop that was mainly or even partly concerned with teaching methods."

More extensive change was reported regarding dimensions to which the Program for Faculty Renewal gave higher priority, namely content knowledge (Table 2, items 1 and 2). Participation was also seen as strongly affecting attitudes toward colleagues, networking skills, scholarly enthusiasm and, to a lesser extent, personal/professional goals and enthusiasm for teaching.

Influence on Teaching

We can look at impact on teaching in one other way. Near the end of the questionnaire was the item, "Please list two or three reasons for your participation in the workshop." As can be seen in Table 3, most persons gave multiple responses (n=222) which we classified into seven categories. About 40 percent of the responses had to do with gaining knowledge or enhancing research; only 10 percent were related to teaching.

Another open-ended item, which gets at impact somewhat differently, asked, "Taking the workshop and reunions together, what have you done differently as a result of participation?" The

pattern of responses is quite different from the previous item. Only 20 percent were classifiable as knowledge or research, whereas 40 percent referred to teaching. If the two columns of Table 3 are construed as a crude pre-post measure, results do support impact on teaching from workshops and reunions.

Most likely, preworkshop publicity led participants to expect impact on knowledge and research, and we have seen that those dimensions were subsequently rated as high in change. But when participants think back over what they have done differently, perhaps the daily demands of teaching-oriented jobs make issues of instructional practice more salient.

Contribution of Reunions

Responses to an open question about what reunions added to participants' experiences were very positive. Some referred to the reunion's role in enhancing workshop content or in refining applications of that content. Most wrote about the personal pleasures of seeing and working again with their workshop colleagues.

Another indication of reunion impact results from comparing ratings of the workshop made by respondents who attended reunions (n=59) with ratings by those who did not (n=64). This "reunion effect," the mean ratings given by attenders minus the mean rating given by nonattenders, is shown in the right-hand columns of Tables 1 and 2. For every item the difference is positive, and for many it reaches conventional levels of statistical significance. The reunion effect is particularly large (Table 2) for changes in scholarly enthusiasm, networking skills, and personal/professional goals. In Table 1 the effect is greatest regarding expectations and objectives. Interestingly, although the leader was not rated significantly more positively by attenders than nonattenders, the sessions and exposure to new teaching methods did receive higher ratings.

These findings support the positive impact of workshops and reunions according to dimensions that match program objectives and in ways that also positively influence teaching. Of course,

self-report data of this kind are limited. These are measures of satisfaction, not of knowledge or skills. Further, the reunion group was largely self-selected (except for a few who would have attended except for circumstances they could not control), and their more positive experience may be due to predispositions rather than to the reunions as such. However, reunion attenders did not rate greater change on every item. For example, there was no reunion effect on items dealing with facilities, recreational activities, knowledge of related disciplines, and attitudes about teaching and learning. In general, the reunion effect pertains to dimensions, such as networking skills, where it is reasonable to expect reunions to have special impact.

Process Analysis of Workshops and Reunions

During my own 10-day summer sojourn on the Stanford campus in 1983, I visited four weekend reunions and several sessions of two workshops during their first week. My observations at particular reunions or workshops ranged from a single session of three hours to nearly eight hours across several sessions over several days. In addition, I had extensive informal contact with participants in the dining hall, dorms, and recreation areas.

During visits to sessions I kept a narrative account, noting times at which particular episodes began and ended. Entries were later coded according to selected categories of leader and member behavior listed in Appendix C. This paper emphasizes four categories which are established correlates of effective instruction (Lysakowski & Walberg, 1981; 1982): (a) cues, i.e., instructions about what is to be learned or about what the learner is to do, (b) participation, i.e., active participation and engagement in activities which produce learning, (c) reinforcement, i.e., the learner experiencing rewards for learning, and (d) corrective feedback, usually formal or informal testing. I was further alert for other characteristics said to be especially important for adult learners, such as (e) attention to the goals of individuals, (f) collaborative planning between leader and members, and (g) cooperative learning activities (Geis & Smith, 1983; Knowles, 1984).

Description of Activities

Although my observations are a limited sample of all workshop and reunion sessions, they do encompass six of the 14 topics listed in Appendix B.

A particularly clear difference among groups relates to how sessions got started. Some began with reference to events in the lives of members, some to accomplishments and contributions of the leader, and some to incidents which are accessible only through the historical record. Much group time focused on "texts." Literature and music groups searched for meanings embodied in texts and examined techniques which are displayed in texts, whereas history and political sciences groups drew upon texts for evidence to document arguments. The later engaged in a good deal of speculation and hypothesizing regarding alternative arguments and explanations. These discussions required that participants analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and speculate as well as recall information.

Leader and member behavior varied a good deal across groups and from one session to another of the same group. Consider these observations based on two sessions of one reunion (attended by 15 members).

> The role of the leader differed remarkably in the two observed sessions of this group. At one, member-initiated discussion followed a 15-minute slide-tape program depicting the place where the author under discussion had lived. During 80 minutes of discussion, both the pace and the content were controlled by members rather than by the leader. The leader attempted to regain control: "We haven't even got to the topic yet." And later: "How did we get onto this?" But these attempts were ineffective. Nevertheless, all members were attentive and all but one contributed to the discussion. With regard to the substance of discusssion, however, the leader was clearly in control. Questions were directed to the leader, whose comments constituted more than 50 percent of the discussion, and only two or three members attempted to make substantive comments themselves. Obviously, the leader was regarded as the expert.
>
> At the other observed session of this reunion, a particular novel was being discussed. This session began with a 23-minute presentation by the leader followed by discussion lasting just over an hour and a half. Member contributions increased as the session proceeded but, even in the

last half hour, did not account for more than a total of ten minutes. The leader seemed conflicted about this one-sidedness, saying at one point, "I don't want to do a lot of talking," but members confirmed privately that this had been the leader's usual role during the workshop and the previous reunion and that they did not find it objectionable.

The level of discourse was generally high at both sessions. Members analyzed and synthesized material across works of two authors and several critics. Most members appeared to be attentive, although one dozed from time to time. Comments were uniformly positive about both the original workshop and the reunion and about the personal and intellectual qualities of the leader. It seems likely, however, that members would have benefited more if the leaders were less verbose and had provided more consistent cues to direct the discussion.

This workshop/reunion and its leader were among the very best as evaluated by questionnaire respondents. They were rated significantly more positively than workshops in general.

To illustrate subtle use of cues, reinforcement, and corrective feedback, I summarize observations from a session of one of the workshops (attended by 13 persons).

The leader controlled discussion by recognizing each speaker, maintaining eye contact with speakers, differentiating segments of the session by verbally cueing introductions, summaries, integration of previous comments, and so on. A frequent cue for moving the discussion to more complex levels was, "Let me give you a hypothetical." Reading assignments were listed in the syllabus and further elaborated in announcements each day.

Questions posed by the leader were the major device for organizing discussion. Most were open in form: "When do you date the Cold War from?" "Can you generate an alternative explanation of that event?" "Were the Soviets frightened of the bomb? How could we determine that? Questions were treated as having a variety of answers and the adequacy of answers was judged by the arguments put forth to justify them.

Member contributions were reinforced by the leader's attentiveness and tendency to build on contributions rather than to change the subject. There were also a few "nonsubstantive" comments by the leader which were probably highly reinforcing, e.g., "I'm delighted you brought that up"; "I do hope you'll write an essay on that."

Members indicated to me that being corrected by the leader did not cause them particular anxiety. If they hesitated to speak, it was because of inability to formulate comments quickly enough to join in before the topic changed. As the week progressed, members began to identify ways by which the leader conveyed judgments about inadequate comments or indirectly indicated correction; e.g., "Let me be more clear what I'm

asking"; "Is there any fact situation which would refute your view?" Occasionally the leader was nonreinforcingly silent, which came to be taken as correction. In short, members felt that evaluation by the leader was continual but indirect.

The verbal and nonverbal attitude of members was that they were there primarily to learn from the leader and much less to learn from one another or to learn jointly with the leader. This did not violate their expectations or lead to dissatisfaction. Members had high praise for the leader. They admired the evident expertise and facility in leading discussion and lamented that their own students were not well enough qualified to benefit from the kind of teaching they were receiving.

This workshop and leader were also rated significantly more positively than workshops/leaders in general.

These two examples are from very positively rated workshops. Across all workshops there was considerable variability. On the four-point scale, mean ratings of leaders (Table 1, Item 4), range from a low of 2.5 for two workshops to a maximum of 4.0 (standard deviation of .75). While the two lowest are merely at the midpoint of the scale, they are significantly lower than the grand mean. The extent to which participants' objectives were met (Table 1, Item 1) also varied significantly across workshops. On this seven-point scale, mean ratings of individual workshops range from 4.1 to 6.3 (standard deviation of 1.1).

At the conclusion of my visit but before inspecting questionnaire results, I ranked workshops according to what I observed and what participants had told me. This ranking was quite similar to the order of mean ratings subsequently generated from questionnaires, and provides further evidence for the validity of questionnaire responses, i.e., questionnaire ratings tended to agree with prior independent observations.

Analysis of Activities

When these activities are examined against accepted indicators of teaching-learning effectiveness, a range of quality continues to be evident. We return to the indicators of attention to individual needs, collaborative planning and learning, participation, reinforcement, corrective feedback, and cues.

As might be expected, the leader was the dominating figure in every group. Leaders showed

interest in needs of individual participants, particularly during informal contacts outside meetings, but content and structure of the workshops had been determined with little attention to individual goals and circumstances. Content was set by the leaders, and members were left to connect content as best they could to their intellectual concerns and teaching responsibilities. This was not, however, a source of expressed dissatisfaction. In fact, participants appreciated that leaders ran a tight ship: "Those leaders are certainly the experts and we appreciate that."

Collaborative planning of workshops was minimal, but the situation was different for reunions. Some groups were surveyed about potential topics. Some members were invited to prepare papers or performances. Thus, members assumed a leader role, at least temporarily, with usually excellent results. Otherwise, workshop and reunion members "talked about the readings" under the direction of the leader. Since the leader was obviously in charge both intellectually and socially, individual commitment to group goals was minimal; indeed, except for a few reunions, there were no explicit goals which the group had developed and to which it was committed. More collaboration would have required quite different tasks under rather different leadership styles.

Overt participation was pretty much limited to discussion and to presentations at reunions. There was virtually no structured conversation outside of the group, and assignments, while heavy on reading, did not require writing. All leaders welcomed verbal participation but not all members participated. Patterns of differential contributions were established early; there was then no longer equal opportunity to participate. That situation has its advantages, since attempts to increase participation would most likely merely produce greater participation by those already participating. Creating new norms for participation would have required new strategies, such as small group work. But it is likely that these sessions were already viewed by the leaders as small groups.

Academics who have survived graduate seminars generally do well in such discussions. Still, more reinforcement goes to the agile speaker than to the person whose facility lies with other modes of expression. Structured oral contributions and brief written communications would not only draw on somewhat different participant skills but also permit more focused feedback.

Corrective feedback was extremely rare. I observed very few attempts to sharpen or correct member contributions, and what did occur was couched in terms so courteous as to be ambiguous. In interviews, I tried to explore how participants decided whether they were "getting it." They noted only a few cues from which that decision could be made. On the other hand, since previous experiences with evaluation were not necessarily pleasant, they were pleased to be free of it. "You could go to the library, read and discuss, rather than be doing assignments." Compared with graduate school, the great freedom of the workshop was the absence of pressure to perform.

Within these rather narrow roles for members and leaders, cues to leader expectations during sessions were clear. Assignments were specific, questions were sharp, speakers were recognized, transitions were signaled, and closure was usually explicit. These leaders were skillful users of cues.

In summary, leaders provided only infrequently the kind of overt participation which elicits corrective feedback, upon which reinforcement is contingent, and which is free from excessive performance pressures.

Issues for Program Design

Two issues for professional development arise out of this program evaluation but transcend the Stanford Program for Faculty Development. One issue concerns the dilemma of those who attempt to incorporate principles of effective teaching and learning into professional development programs, and the other concerns special characteristics of the clientele for such programs.

Teaching-Learning Process

Teaching-learning issues in professional development are quite parallel to issues faced in undergraduate and graduate instruction, that is, how to enable learners to assume optimal responsibility for learning while receiving adequate feedback on performance from external sources. At these workshops and (to a lesser extent) at reunions, responsibility for choosing content and for structuring process was almost exclusively assumed by staff and leaders, and there

was little opportunity beyond group discussion to demonstrate learning and to receive feedback. Nevertheless, participants reported that their expectations were met and that their satisfaction was high.

The dilemma for practitioners in faculty development is that (a) conformity to participants' preferences regarding teaching and learning enhances their satisfaction and (b) attention to principles of effective instruction enhances their learning, but (c) instructional principles may conflict with participants' preferences.

Professor Participants

Professional development programs must also take account of the present extraordinarily demoralizing professional situations faced by many college professors.

In conversations at Stanford and on individual campuses, faculty described how the volume of teaching and other required work has become increasingly debilitating. Little intellectual energy is left for keeping up with their fields and virtually none for making contributions to them. Some feel their colleagues teach "as if they were still in the 60s" partly because this is when they were trained and partly because they apparently find the political and social climate of that time more congenial. Heavy work loads along with sparce resources permit little professional travel and preclude the use of summers for study and research.

Awareness of reduced faculty mobility is keen. Few faculty are leaving and fewer still are coming in. One professor noted that this year marked the first tenure-track appointment in his area in 14 years. Another observed that he is the person hired most recently in his discipline but that he was hired 15 years ago. Because so many faculty are senior, most are tenured and at the top of the pay scale. Administrators have little discretion in rewards for professional accomplishments and faculty have few incentives for attempting such appointments.

Other customary sources of stimulation have also decreased. There are fewer new students, the novelty of non-traditional students has worn off, and course development is more often driven by external factors, such as student demand, than by intellectual interests of the faculty.

These faculty describe campuses as places of far less intellectual interchange than they desire. Conversations tend to be about morning headlines or campus politics rather than about ideas. Even if they did wish to discuss research interests, few colleagues share disciplinary specialties. Further, intense rivalry among departments for resources keeps interaction at a level which apparently is incompatible with open intellectual interchange.

Many of these issues are perennial concerns. Others are products of the present academic depression and call for measures which increase career flexibility (Menges, 1985). The situation is "depressive" in a personal as well as economic sense. The professional development field must find ways to provide programs and services which foster emotional renewal and to do so without slighting disciplinary and pedagogical development.

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Table 1

SATISFACTION WITH WORKSHOPS

(n=123)

	MEAN (SD)	REUNION EFFECT [A]
Seven point scale:		
1. MY EXPECTATIONS	5.7 (1.1)	.60*
2. ADVERTISED OBJECTIVES	5.8 (1.1)	.49*
Four point scale:		
3. SESSION EFFECTIVENESS	3.2 (.74)	.35*
4. LEADER EFFECTIVENESS	3.3 (.75)	.20
5. NEW TEACHING METHODS	2.1 (.65)	.35*

[A]Mean rating of reunion attenders (n=59) minus mean rating of reunion nonattenders (n=64).

*Significant at $p < .05$.

Table 2

CHANGE DUE TO WORKSHOPS

(n=123)

Seven point scale[B]:	MEAN (SD)	REUNION EFFECT[A]
1. KNOWLEDGE OF MY DISCIPLINE	4.2 (1.6)	.49
2. KNOWLEDGE OF RELATED DISCIPLINES	4.4 (1.5)	.07
3. SCHOLARLY ENTHUSIASM	4.8 (1.9)	.75*
4. TEACHING METHODS IN MY FIELD	2.7 (1.6)	.27
5. TEACHING IN ANY FIELD	3.3 (1.7)	.54
6. ENTHUSIASM FOR TEACHING	4.2 (2.1)	.15
7. ATTITUDES TOWARD COLLEAGUES	4.6 (1.7)	.36
8. NETWORKING SKILLS	4.0 (2.0)	.98*
9. PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL GOALS	4.2 (2.0)	.85*

[A]Mean rating of reunion attenders (n=59) minus mean rating of reunion nonattenders (n=64).

[B]For each item the respondent was asked to rate the amount of change he or she experienced as a result of participation.

*Significant at $p < .05$.

Table 3

REASONS FOR AND RESULTS OF PARTICIPATION
(n=123)

	REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION n %	*RESULTS OF PARTICIPATION* n %
KNOWLEDGE/RESEARCH	92 (41)	29 (20)
PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL	60 (27)	26 (18)
TEACHING	21 (10)	57 (40)
STANFORD LOCATION	26 (12)	NA (--)
LEADERS REPUTATION	19 (07)	02 (01)
NOTHING/NO RESPONSE	04 (02)	16 (11)
CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM	NA (--)	12 (09)
TOTAL	222 (99)	142 (99)

APPENDIX A

The Program for Faculty Renewal: A Brief Description

In 1979 the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation succeeded the Lilly Endowment in providing support to a regional program for faculty renewal established in 1975 at Stanford University. The program's aim is to give faculty members at all stages of their careers a chance to revitalize their scholarly commitments through contact, study, and discussion with colleagues from Stanford and other post-secondary institutions. The faculty members in the program come from four-year state colleges and universities, private liberal arts colleges, and community colleges in California, Washington, and Oregon. From 1979 to 1984, some four hundred faculty members took part in one or more phases of the program.

SUMMER WORKSHOPS: The main Program activity is a series of two-week summer workshops. From two to four workshops, all on a common theme of a humanistic and interdisciplinary nature, run concurrently. Workshop leaders are Stanford faculty with outstanding skills as teachers and a particular interest in interdisciplinary approaches. Participants are nominated by their West Coast institutions, following invitations and publicity from the Program. They select one workshop, with the option of attending another. For the two weeks, they live at Stanford, with room and board provided by the Program, and attend one or more daily workshop sessions of two hours. Most of the time is dominated by discussion of works participants have read in advance. The balance of the schedule is spent in the library or at special evening presentations.

Workshop topics have ranged from "Art, Architecture and Technology" to "Modern Theory and Criticism." History, Literature, Music, Political Science, and Art have all received attention.

REUNION WORKSHOPS: Whenever possible, one and two years after their original workshop, the Program invites participants back for a weekend of further discussion. Although the time is brief, it is sufficient for faculty members to reinforce the intellectual relationships and interests devloped in the previous get-together. The workshops are held at Stanford, and room and board are again supplied by the program.

WEEKEND CONFERENCES: To make its renewal opportunities even more accessible, the Program periodically joins with

an interested institution to sponsor a one- or two-day regional conference for nearby faculty. From 50 to 100 faculty are supported through an agenda of presentations and discussions. Past conferences include "Humanistic Aspects in International Studies Teaching" in association with the University of Oregon, and "Art as Social Criticism in Modern China and Japan" in conjunction with California State University, Northridge.

STANFORD SEMINARS: Finally, the Program funds seminars for Stanford faculty and visitors who meet weekly over one or more quarters for exploration of a continuing theme. Past topics have included "Renaissances before the Renaissance" and "Feminist Studies."

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Appendix B

WORKSHOPS BY YEAR

1979: Technology in America

Art, Architecture, and Technology

Technology and Western Culture

1980: U.S. and Europe

Image of America in Europe

Japan and America

Anglo and Latin America

1981: The Bloomsbury Group

Feminist Perspectives

Modern Theory and Criticism

1982: Literature and the Visual Arts

Analysis and Performance of Classic Music

1983: Postwar America

America as a Normal Power

Appendix C

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

A. CUES FROM LEADER

B. PARTICIPATION BY MEMBERS

C. REINFORCEMENT

D. CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

E. INDIVIDUAL GOALS

F. COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

G. COOPERATIVE LEARNING